

# WALKING INTO HISTORY

## Duxbury's own colossus to be put back on its feet

By JOE MCGEE

The Patriot Ledger

**I**t has been 32 years since The Patriot Ledger found the missing legs of Duxbury's colossus of Myles Standish.

Today they'll be hoisted back to prominence by a history buff who helped salvage them from a Quincy granite yard in 1998.

"I always wondered what would happen to them," former Patriot Ledger reporter Pauline Pyle said.

Working on a tip from locals in Duxbury, Pyle scoured Quincy's granite quarries for a month in 1970 looking for the lower half of the statue – the part that survived a lightning strike in 1922 and was thought either lost or part of the new statue that currently sits on Captain's Hill.

After finding them standing upright at Monti's Memorials on Centre Street, Pyle rewrote Duxbury history in a story published Dec. 21, 1970.

In it, she confirmed that the statue now standing on Captain's Hill in Duxbury is a replica, and that only one arm holding the Plymouth Colony Charter is an original piece.

Historians had been confused about its authenticity for years. The upper and lower halves are different colors, making some believe that the lower half was saved and the head is a replica.

News reports, however, say that Quincy sculptor John Horrigan actually replaced the entire statue in 1927 when he realized the legs could not support the head. The difference in color is because the sections are made of two different types of granite.

The original legs were brought to Horrigan's business in Quincy, and later to Monti's in 1958 when Horrigan went out of business. They stayed there until Pyle, a reporter for 30 years who retired in 1993, went out to find the truth.

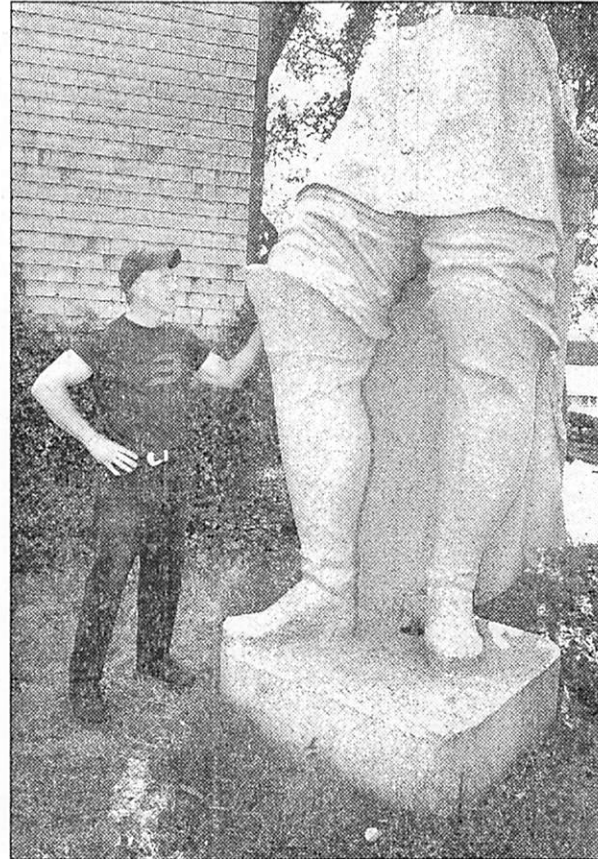
"I had hit the pot at the end of the rainbow," Pyle said of stumbling upon the legs.

Nobody bothered to retrieve the artifact until Marc Valentine salvaged the 12-foot, 10-ton monolith in 1998, carrying it on a flatbed truck down Route 3 with a State Police escort. Saturday he will kick off a "Save the Legs" drive to raise money to sculpt a new torso.

The family event will start at 3 p.m. and feature an unusual display of British pride to honor Standish, a former captain in the Queen's Army. The world's largest British flag will be unfurled while "God Save the Queen" plays as the legs are raised to a standing position off Route 58 in Halifax. A bonfire and marshmallow roast will honor Queen's Elizabeth II's "Golden Jubilee," which was celebrated with signal fires around England this year.

"We're just trying to spark a little interest in history," said Valentine, who is keeper of the National Flag Exhibit – a display of government-owned flags that tours the country.

"It's just something that's a lot of fun," he said.



LISA BÜL/The Patriot Ledger.

**Marc Valentine of Hanson with "Save the Legs Committee" stands with the granite legs of the original statue of Capt. Myles Standish. The legs are being rededicated on Saturday and placed in Hanson.**

Although Standish founded Duxbury, which is named after his family's estate in England, Valentine said he owned land in Halifax in the Monponsett area upon which now sits an elementary school.

"In a way we have just as much right. He was all over this place," he said.

The original statue was commissioned in 1872 by a group of patriotic Duxbury residents. Designed by Alden Frank, the cornerstone was laid during an Oct. 16, 1872 ceremony with 10,000 onlookers. It took six yoke of oxen with immense derricks to pull the granite up the hill.

Pyle always wondered what happened to her great find. Duxbury historians acknowledged her work in 1970, and she thought it would inspire someone to take the legs. If they weren't made into a memorial, Pyle figured they would end up elsewhere, like someone's garden.

"I can't understand why it has taken so long. They have such beautiful estates in Duxbury, I could just picture them in someone's flower garden," she said.

Today Pyle lives in Plymouth where she can see the statue on Captain's Hill from the shore. "When I go down to the waterfront I can still see it," she said.

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